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XI.—NOTES ON SPANISH SOURCES OF MOLIÈRE.

THE object of this article is to call attention to certain cases of close resemblance between passages in Molière's plays and others taken from Spanish literature or connected with it. Except in details where credit is duly given to the discoverer, none of these cases has ever before been noted, to my knowledge.

It is seldom possible to decide categorically whether or no these parallels are genuine instances of borrowing by Molière, or merely coincidences of thought and expression. Therefore I am content usually to leave the judgment to the reader, after putting the facts before him.

1. "JE PRENDS MON BIEN . . ."

"Il m'est permis, disoit Molière, de reprendre mon bien où je le trouve." So Grimarest records,¹ and every critic who has touched upon the subject of imitation in the great comic writer has repeated it, giving to the phrase the meaning which best suited him. But no one seems to have noticed that the sentence is itself merely a quotation from a contemporary play. *Le Gouvernement de Sanche Pansa* by Guérin de Bouscal (Paris, 1642, 4°), is one of the free adaptations of Don Quixote which were not uncommon in France from 1630 to 1660. The scene is laid at the time when Sancho receives the reins of government, and his skill in judging the cases brought before him is put upon the stage.¹ His judgments are, however, quite different

¹ Grimarest, *Vie de Molière*, ed. P.—Malassis, 1877, p. 8.

from those imagined by Cervantes. At the conclusion of one of them Sancho observes:

" la justice approuue,
Qu'on reprenne son bien partout où lon le trouue."
Act III, sc. 2, p. 51.

If this play had no further connection with Molière, one might well be sceptical about this source. But this very play was one of those given most frequently by Molière's troupe during the first years of its stay in Paris — 29 times from 1659 to 1665 (inclusive). (See La Grange's *Registre*.) More than this, Molière himself played the part of Sancho, if we are to place any reliance upon another story told by Grimarest, how the great author, seated on Sancho's donkey, tried in vain to restrain the beast until the proper time for his entrance on the stage.¹ Even if this story be not accepted, it seems most probable that Molière would have taken Sancho's rôle for his own. In any case he was very familiar with the play, and the conclusion is made probable almost to certainty that he really did remark "Je prends mon bien où je le trouve," applying to his own case the phrase from the well-known comedy, and his hearers doubtless understood it as a quotation. By the time the story reached Grimarest the source of the phrase was lost from view.

The Spanish original contains nothing of the kind.

¹ *Vie de Molière*, ed. cit., pp. 75-77. That Grimarest's information was uncertain is evidenced by the fact that he puts the date of this performance, "après le retour de Baron," i. e. after Easter, 1670. Now no Don Quixote play appears on the *Registre* of La Grange from that time till Molière's death; one might perhaps have been given at some of the visits to court. Moreover Grimarest gives the title as *Dom Quixote*, and yet says that it relates Sancho's installation in his government—something true of none of the Don Quixote plays except *Le Gouvernement de Sanche Pansa*.

2. DON QUIXOTE.

Molière was inspired by Cervantes through the medium of Guérin de Bouscal in another instance. The scene in *le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (III, 12) in which Mme. Jourdain so sensibly objects to her husband's desire for a son-in-law of rank is copied closely from the similar dispute between Sancho Pansa and his wife Teresa (*Don Quixote*, part II, ch. 5), as was pointed out long since by Cailhava (*De l'Art de la comédie*, 1786, II, 329). The scene appears in *la Suite de Dom Quichotte*, by Guérin de Bouscal (1639).¹ The fact that Molière knew the French dramatic version is made clear by the following lines from de Bouscal:

"SANCHE: N'en parlons plus, suffit, elle sera comtesse :
Et si vous me fâchez, elle sera Princesse."

This idea is not to be found in Cervantes, and it was plainly appropriated by Molière:

"M. JOURDAIN: Ne me répliquez pas davantage: ma fille sera marquise, en dépit de tout le monde; et, si vous me mettez en colère, je la ferai duchesse."

Two cases follow which seem to show that Molière had his Cervantes fresh in mind when he was writing *le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.²

M. Jourdain stammers out a compliment to Dorimène in these terms (III, 19): "—et si j'avais aussi le mérite pour mériter un mérite comme le vôtre, —." Compare this extract from one of the books of chivalry which turned the head of the unfortunate gentleman from La Mancha

¹ This play I know only through the account of it given by the Frères Parfaict, *Histoire du théâtre français*, VI, 21-26.

² I am indebted to Prof. P. B. Marcou for these two *rapprochements*. Apparently neither of the passages is covered by any of the French Don Quixote plays.

(Part I, ch. I): "Los altos cielos que de vuestra divinidad divinamente con las estrellas os fortifican, y os hacen merecedora del merecimiento que merece la vuestra grandeza."

Covielle flatters M. Jourdain by telling him that his father was no shop-keeper, but a gentleman (IV, 5): "Lui, marchand! C'est pure médisance, il ne l'a jamais été. Tout ce qu'il faisoit, c'est qu'il étoit fort obligeant, fort officieux; et, comme il se connoissoit fort bien en étoffes, il en alloit choisir de tous les côtés, les faisoit apporter chez lui, et en donnoit à ses amis pour de l'argent."

The inn-keeper whom Don Quixote encounters in his first expedition is of equal gentility (Part I, ch. 3):

".... le dijo que á lo ultimo se había venido á recoger á aquel su castillo, donde vivía con su hacienda y con las agenas, recogiendo en él á todos los caballeros andantes de cualquiera calidad y condición que fuesen, sólo por la mucha afición que les tenía, y porque partiesen con él de sus haberes en pago de su buen deseo."

3. ARSINOÉ.

M. Emile Roy, in his monograph on Charles Sorel¹ (Paris, 1891), which is so fertile in suggestions, has called attention to a story entitled *la Dévote hypocrite*, pp. 204 seq. of *les Nouvelles de Lancelot, tirées des plus célèbres auteurs espagnols* (first edition, Paris, 1628). He notes in it a situation resembling that in *le Misanthrope*, in fact does not doubt that Molière borrowed from it, but was unable to find the Spanish original. I have seen it, however, in the Biblioteca Nacional at Madrid; it is the third

¹ Pp. 136-139.

in the volume of *Novelas* by Francisco de Lugo y Davila¹ (1622). But Molière's debt does not seem to me so certain as to M. Roy. He has given a full summary of the story, and I will not repeat it here. In brief, it tells of two orphan sisters, Delia and Lamia, who live alone in Madrid and receive many callers. The former is the elder, and of a coquettish turn, though honest enough; Lamia is quite the opposite, pious on the surface but secretly harboring a poor lover. The younger sister, growing ambitious, prepares to lay siege to the rich Fernando, the favored lover of Delia. She chooses her time, and with a false show of modesty declares her love to Fernando, calling his attention to her sister's coquetry, and proposing herself as a more discreet and desirable substitute. Fernando is not greatly impressed, however, and after a succession of vain snares laid by Lamia he marries Delia, while her malicious sister is exposed and retires to a convent.

M. Roy points out the resemblance of Lamia's character to that of Arsinoé. Each pretended prude endeavors to deprive her coquettish rival of her lover; and this she does by denouncing to him the rival's freedom of manners. There the resemblance ends. Lamia is a much more malicious and disagreeable person than Arsinoé; it is her sister whom she strives to render unhappy and to ruin; and her frank hypocrisy adds the last touch to her odiousness. Yet the whole situation is in a general way like that of *le Misanthrope*, and Molière may have found some inspiration in the story, which he is more likely to have

¹ Ticknor gives the name as Lugo y Avila. The copy I saw had this title: *Teatro popular: Novelas morales para mostrar los generos de vidas del pueblo, y afectos, costumbres, y pasiones del animo, cõ aprouechamiento para todas personas, por D. Francisco de Lugo y Davila. En Madrid, etc., Año 1622. Pp. 61b to 76a, Novela tercera, de las dos hermanas.*

known in the translation than in the original. It is interesting to note the distinct literary value of this obscure tale by an almost unknown author; for it indicates the high level of interest maintained by Spanish story-tellers of the *siglo de oro*. The *novelista* seldom failed to find an interesting situation and an illuminating psychological touch.

4. ESPÉRER AND DÉSESPÉRER.

The famous sonnet of Oronte in *le Misanthrope* (I, 2) has long been the subject of discussion. Many have asserted that the sonnet was never written by Molière himself, but was taken from the manuscript of some court gallant. There is no proof of this, and M. Roy has thrown all the probability on the other side of the argument by showing that two characteristic phrases in it occur also in Molière's earlier play, *Dom Garcie de Navarre*.¹

The *chute* of the sonnet is well-known :

"Belle Philis, on désespère
Alors qu'on espère toujours."

Many critics have brought together examples of this association of *espérer* and its derivative. One striking parallel is furnished by the refrain of a serenade sung by hired musicians in the original Don Juan play, *el Burlador de Sevilla*.² This refrain, addressed to doña Ana, is as follows :

"El que un bien gozar espera,
Cuanto espera desespera."

Other passages are the following,—a stanza by Lope de Stúñiga (15th cent.):

¹ *Ch. Sorel*, pp. 134-135; and 135, n. 1.

² II, 12. There is nothing in *le Festin de Pierre* to show that Molière ever knew the *Burlador*.

“Esperança los que esperan
 Me suelen todos llamar :
 Mas algunos desesperan
 Por mucho tiempo esperar.”

Some verses of Ronsard describing love :

“Un désespoir où toujours on espère,
 Un espérer où lon se désespère.”

This last is in turn derived from a similar description of love in *Le Roman de la Rose*, where a succession of paradoxes includes “espérance désespérée.”¹

Lines from Lope de Vega's *Gatomaquia*, silva II :

“¡ Oh quanto amor un alma desespera,
 Pues cuando ya se ve sin esperanza
 En un relleno tomará venganza ! ”²

M. Roy, for some inexplicable reason, chooses to reject all these examples and states that the real source of the sonnet is a sentence in the story of *la Dévote hypocrite*, with which we have just been dealing.³ Lamie says (as quoted by Roy), “Un amant ne veut plus servir si longtemps sans récompense, l'amour sans la jouissance se convertit en impatience, l'impatience en désespoir, le désespoir en inconstance, et l'inconstance en mépris.” To my mind this quotation is the least convincing of all. More so is the corresponding passage from Lancelot's Spanish model. It runs thus (*Novelas* of Lugo y Davila, p. 66a): “Dilatas esperanças son oy desesperaciones, y lo q̃ en otros siglos possessiõ, es oy esperãça, . . .” But that is no closer than the rest.

¹ On the above passages and the commentators who noted them, see the Despois-Mesnard edition of Molière, V, 462, n. 5.

² This less happy example is given by Livet in his edition of *le Misanthrope*, Paris, 1883, p. 129. He wrongly gives the reference as silva VI.

³ *Ch. Sorel*, pp. 136-138.

I wish to add a few parallels from Spanish sources:—

In the *égloga* of *Plácida y Vitoriano* by Juan del Encina (1514?) are found these lines (p. 264 of the edition of the Real Academia Española):

“No sé por qué no me voy,
Que esperando me destruyo.
Quien espera desespera
Y una hora se le hace un año.”

In the *Farsa ó cuasi comedia* of Lucas Fernández which begins *Ay de mí triste* (1514) are the following lines (p. 55 of the Academy edition):

“Quien espera desespera:
El que busca anda perdido:
No hay muerte más verdadera
Y más entera
Que vivir el aborrido.”

In Tirso de Molina's comedy, *Marta la piadosa* (1614), the heroine opens the first act with a sonnet, of which this is the last tiercet:

“Mas á mi la esperanza de mis males
De tal modo me aflige y desespera
Que no puedo esperar ni aun esperanza.”

In another play of Tirso, the tragedy *la Venganza de Tamar*, appear these words of the love-sick hero (I, 11):

“De imposibles soy un mostro,
Esperando desespero.”

Lastly, a story by María de Zayas, called *Tarde llega el desengaño* (1637), opens with a bit of poetry, a sonnet with coda, which contains this line:

“Espero, desespero, gimo, y lloro.”¹

¹ *Biblioteca de Autores españoles*, XXXIII, 574.

If we were to pursue the word-play down to more recent times, we should find that it had passed out of the hands of writers with a tendency to preciosity into those of the people. The phrase "Quien espera se desespera" appears as a proverbial expression in the *Colección de Refranes* of Antonio Jiménez, Madrid, 1828.¹

All this merely goes to show that as long as these two words of like sound and opposed meaning exist in Romance languages, they will continue to be juxtaposed for a certain effect. He would be a bold critic who, with this array of independent examples before him, should accuse Molière of having "derived" the idea of his sonnet.

5. EL MARQUÉS DE ALFARACHE.

The volume commonly known to students of Spanish drama as *las Fiestas del Santísimo Sacramento* is a collection of *autos con sus loas y entremeses* first published in 1644 as the work of Lope de Vega. It is reprinted in the second volume of the monumental edition of Lope's works now in process of publication. Menéndez y Pelayo considers that the *autos* in it are genuine, but that the shorter pieces are of uncertain authorship.² The sixth *entremés* is entitled *el Marqués de Alfarache*, and, whether it be by Lope or another, affords material of some slight interest. It is a vivacious farce, tending to the burlesque. The striking thing about the piece as a whole is that it aims a vigorous blow against the inveterate enemies of Molière, the *petits marquis*. The satire is as violent as that of the *Précieuses ridicules*, the *Critique de l'école des femmes*, or

¹ The proverb may occur in some earlier *refranero*, but I have not observed it in any.

² p. L, vol. II, *Obras de Lope de Vega, publicadas por la Real Academia española*. 1892.

the *Impromptu de Versailles*, if not so fine or deep. One recognizes as a first cousin of Mascarille this empty-headed marquis, so ill-served, who takes up half the play with his dressing, amid mock ceremony, and who replies, when told that his glove-maker refuses to purvey to him longer until her bill is paid:

“ ¡ Desconfiada, pícara ! Pagadla,
Y buscad, Camarero, otra guantera
Que fíe, y que no pida que la pague,
Que yo estoy luego allá para servirla.”

If one expects to find this family air of resemblance borne out in details, one is only half rewarded. The very opening scene is tempting, but deceptive. The Marquis rushes half-dressed upon the stage, and shouts:

“ ¡Hola, don Blas, don Lucas, don Gregorio,
Don Onofre, don Marcos, don Hilario,
Don Benito, don Pablo, don Crisóstomo,
Don Simeón, don Celdos, don Tadeo,
Don Joaquín, don Baltasar, don Lázaro,
Don Fabián, don Lesmes, don Manzano,
Don Tiburcio, don Claudio, don Mauricio,
Don Celidón, don Gil, don Policarpo;
Hola, criados; hola, pajes; hola,
Toda la letanía de los dones;
Hola, mozos de cámara, oficiales,
Gutiérrez, Zangas, Salmerón, Aguirre,
Argán, Doria, Domeque, Ayora, Hernández,
Julio, Adamuz, Andújar, Salamea,
Caracul, Lazarillo! ¿no hay alguno
Que me venga á vestir?

PAGE: Llama Vusia?

MARQ: Y he dado muchas voces....

CAMARERO: Yo ando ocupado agora con el sastre
Y con el bordador.

MARQ: No sé qué os diga;
Yo soy muy mal servido de vosotros,
Y es menester poner en razón esto."

Upon reading this scene (which is precisely in the vein of Scarron) one thinks at once of the Marquis de Mascarille in scene XI of the *Précieuses ridicules*, calling:

“Holà ! Champagne, Picard, Bourguignon, Cascaret, Basque, la Ver-dure, Lorrain, Provençal, la Violette ! Au diable soient tous les laquais ! Je ne pense pas qu'il y ait gentilhomme en France plus mal servi que moi. Ces canailles me laissent toujours seul.”

In fact Molière borrowed direct from a comedy of Tristan l'Hermite, *Le Parasite* (1654).¹ There it is the terrible Captain who breaks out in invective (I, 5):

“Holà, ho, Bourguignon, Champagne, le Picard,
Le Basque, Cascaret! . . .
Las d'aller, Triboulet! Où sont tous mes valets? . . .
Je ne suis point servi: toute cette canaille
Se cache au cabaret, ainsi que rats en paille.
Holà! qu'on vienne à moy.

CASCARET: Que vous plaist-il, Monsieur ?

LE CAPITAN: Où sont tous ces coquins ? J'enrage de bon cœur :
Ils ne répondent point lorsque je les appelle.

CASCARET: Monsieur.

LE CAPITAN: Je leur rompray quelque jour la cervelle.
Où sont tes compagnons, qui ne me suivent point?

CASCARET: L'un racoutre ses bas et l'autre son pourpoint,” . . . etc.

Frank as usual in his appropriations, Molière has not even taken the trouble to change the proper names, but has acted as if careful and willing to ensure to his obscure predecessors what little honor might be due them. The possibility remains that Tristan may have been acquainted with the Spanish farce, which has at least the advantage of priority. The “hose and doublet” with which Cascaret's companions are busied seem to bear more than a chance relation to the camarero's “tailor and embroiderer.”

¹ *Œuvres de Molière*, ed. Despois-Mesnard, II, 105, n. 3. The play is reprinted by V. Fournel, in *Les Contemporains de Molière*, vol. III, pp. 9-67.

Besides, the comedy of *le Parasite* smacks of Spanish intrigue in other ways. This Lisandre is employing no new ruse when in order to obtain entrance to his sweetheart's house he impersonates her brother, carried off by Turkish pirates when a child. Teodoro, in Lope's *Perro del Hortelano*, used precisely the same method with complete success in order to get a foothold in a family of wealth and rank. Still more similar is the outline of Fernando de Zárate's *la Presumida y la Hermosa*. In it Diego, only son of a Seville family, is taken captive by Moors on his way home from Flanders, where he has been since childhood. Juan, a fellow-soldier, arrives penniless in Seville and falls in love with Diego's sister Leonor. Juan's lackey, one of those of much resource, introduces himself as the missing Diego, and brings Juan into the house as his friend and comrade-in-arms. The plot develops into one of the most complicated intrigues in all Spanish drama, and in the last act the real Diego turns up, causing confusion and subsequent explanations. Just so old Alcidor in the French comedy appears from captivity to put Lisandre to shame. It is true that *la Presumida y la Hermosa* first appears in print in a mixed collection of 1665,¹ but it may have been and probably was put on the stage and circulated in manuscript long before. Cold type was the last step in the progress of a Spanish play toward publicity.

But let us return to the Marquis of Alfarache, who has been dressing meanwhile. We find him at the moment when a police officer is announced.

"MARQUÉS :

Díle

Que aunque venga de punta, que entre luego.

¿ Qué querrá el Alguacil de Corte agora?

Querrá pedirme alguna colgadura,

¹ *Parte veinte y tres de comedias nuevas*, etc., Madrid, 1665. (Ticknor library.)

- Ó cartas de favor para algún príncipe?
¡ Amigo mío !
- ALGUACIL: Deme Vuesoría
Las manos.
- MARQ: Oh, señor! Los brazos tengo
Para estas ocasiones ; tome silla.
- ALG. Muy bueno estoy en pie.
- MARQ: Silla.
- ALG: Yo vengo
Más de prisa, señor.
- MARQ: Silla por vida
De la Marquesa: silla, Alguacil mío:
Silla por mi salud.
- ALG: Pues quiere honrarme,
Vuesoría, yo quiero obedecerle.
- MARQ: Cúbrase por mi amor : bonete digo.
- ALG: Yo estoy así muy bien.
- MARQ: Acabe, acabe.
Á personas honradas.
- ALG: Aquí es justo
Obedecer á Vuecelencia en todo.
- MARQ: ¿ Como está mi señora doña Bárbara?
- ALG: Doña Juana se llama.
- MARQ: Eso no importa :
Para con Dios lo mismo es uno que otro.
- Como está su merced, al fin ?
- ALG : Muy buena
Y muy criada desta casa.
- MARQ: Tiénela
Afición la Condesa muy notable.
- ALG: No sé yo que haya vista á doña Juana
Mi señora la Marquesa.
- MARQ: Reconoce
Lo que merece, aun sin haberla visto."

When at last the officer discloses his errand, which is to attach the property of the Marquis on behalf of a tailor, the noble loses his politeness with his temper, and pours forth a shower of evil names, which the Alguacil endures, saying in comic resignation :

"Tráteme Vusía

Como es razón que mi persona trate,
Y como de tan gran señor espero."

It is worth while to compare this scene with that famous one of *le Festin de Pierre* (IV, 3), the visit of M. Dimanche to his creditor Don Juan. There is no need to relate anew a passage which is one of the best known in all Molière, but it is necessary to quote a few speeches for the purpose of comparison with the preceding selection.

- "DON JUAN: Allons, vite, un siège pour monsieur Dimanche.
M. DIMANCHE: Monsieur, je suis bien comme cela.
D. J.: Point, point, je veux que vous soyez assis contre moi.
M. D.: Cela n'est point nécessaire.
D. J.: Ôtez ce pliant, et apportez un fauteuil.
M. D.: Monsieur, vous vous moquez; et....
D. J.: Non, non, je sais ce que je vous dois; et je ne veux point qu'on mette de différence entre nous deux.
M. D.: Monsieur.
D. J.: Allons, asseyez-vous.
M. D.: Il n'est pas besoin, monsieur, et je n'ai qu'un mot à vous dire. J'étois....
D. J.: Mettez-vous là, vous dis-je.
M. D.: Non, monsieur, je suis bien.... Je viens pour....
D. J.: Non, je ne vous écoute point si vous n'êtes assis.
M. D.: Monsieur, je fais ce que vous voulez. Je....
D. J.:
D. J.: Comment se porte madame Dimanche, votre épouse?
M. D.: Fort bien, monsieur, Dieu merci.
D. J.: C'est une brave femme.
M. D.: Elle est votre servante, monsieur. Je venois...."

The close similarity in the phraseology of the two scenes is apparent; whether or not it implies interdependence I will not attempt to decide. Others have mentioned in this connection a couple of anecdotes related by Tallemant des Réaux, which give in a few lines, without any detail, an outline of just such a scene as Molière's¹; but that he

¹ See the Despois-Mesnard edition of Molière, V, 172, n. 2.

knew the stories is merely a supposition. In any case, no one will deny that Molière has cast about these germs such a final shape as to discourage followers. Although the Spanish author, be he Lope or another, is a close rival of the Frenchman in acuteness of phrase, the latter is far superior in dramatic effect, because Don Juan, unlike the marquis of Alfarache, is forewarned of his visitor's object, and because he carries his hypocrisy through to a triumphal end. It is at least noteworthy that this *entremés* should appear to enforce a statement of F. Génin, who assuredly had never heard of Alfarache, but remarked of the Dimanche scene, "Don Juan se transforme tout à coup ici en un marquis de la cour de Louis XIV."

6. THE "HONNÊTES DIABLEMESSES."

There are two places in which Molière has expressed his contempt for a certain type of woman. One is a famous passage in *l'École des Femmes* (IV, 8), where Chrysalde defends his position by describing a worse, that is,

.... "de me voir mari de ces femmes de bien
Dont la mauvaise humeur fait un procès sur rien,
Ces dragons de vertu, ces honnêtes diableses,
Se retranchant toujours sur leurs sages prouesses,
Qui, pour un petit tort qu'elles ne nous font pas,
Prennent droit de traiter les gens de haut en bas,
Et veulent, sur le pied de nous être fidèles,
Que nous soyons tenus à tout endurer d'elles."

The other passage is in the *Impromptu de Versailles* (sc. 1), where Molière instructs Mlle. Béjart as to the rôle she is to play. "Vous, vous représentez une de ces femmes qui, pourvu qu'elles ne fassent point l'amour, croient que tout le reste leur est permis; de ces femmes qui se retranchent toujours fièrement sur leur prudence, regardent un chacun de haut en bas, et veulent que toutes

les plus belles qualités que possèdent les autres ne soient rien en comparaison d'un misérable honneur dont personne ne se soucie."

There is a connection too close to be slighted between these passages and part of a satire by Scarron, the so-called *Épître chagrine au maréchal d'Albret*. Written near the end of Scarron's life, a few years before the *École des Femmes*, this poem and some others show that Scarron was capable of something better than burlesque. It contains a series of portraits of *fâcheux*, among them this:

" vous dont la chasteté
Remplit l'esprit d'une sottise fierté,
Qui prétendez qu'aux pudiques Lucreesses,
Il est permis de faire les Diablesses,
Et que pourveu qu'on garde son honneur,
On peut n'avoir ni bonté ni douceur ;
Et là dessus, Ô Mesdames les Prudes !
Vous devenez inciviles et rudes,
Et tout le monde, et mesme vos Espoux,
Ont à souffrir, et se plaindre de vous."¹

If these verses did not furnish Molière some ideas — and other parts of the same poem bear witness to the affirmative — at least the great comedian had a predecessor not unworthy of him in the same field of caustic observation. But another famous man was ahead of both. The *entremeses* of Cervantes (1615) form a portion of his work usually overlooked, yet ranking after the *Novelas ejemplares* and before the comedies in their wealth of rich idiom and of quaint and penetrating thought, such as delight the heart of the Cervantist. They are more pretentious than most of the *entremeses* of the time, and it hardly seems possible that they ever were used for the purpose which their name implies, that is to furnish the spectators with a moment of pure fun between the acts of a more stately comedy.

¹ *Œuvres de Scarron*, Paris, 1786, VII, 173.

The one which now concerns us, *el Juez de los Divorcios*, is not at all dramatic, but it contains portraits drawn from life. Before the divorce judge appear various couples, who for various causes desire their bonds broken. With the rest come doña Guiomar and her husband, soldier, idler, and poet; it is she who appeals for divorce, and he acquiesces, for, as he says, his condemnation will be his deliverance. Yet the soldier cannot restrain a mild protest when doña Guiomar declares that she would have been tempted to seek a substitute for such a ne'erdo-weel had she not been an honest woman. "Por esto sólo merecía ser querida esta mujer," says he; "pero debajo deste pundonor tiene encubierta la más mala condición de la tierra; pide celos sin causa; grita sin porqué; presume sin hacienda; . . . y es lo peor, señor Juez, que quiere, que á trueco de la fidelidad que me guarda, le sufra y disimule millares de millares de impertinencias y desabrimientos que tiene. . . . ¿Por qué me hacéis cargo de que sois buena, estando vos obligada á serlo, por ser de tan buenos padres nacida, por ser cristiana, y por lo que debéis á vos misma? Bueno es que quieran las mujeres que las respetan sus maridos porque son castas y honestas; como si en sólo esto consistiese, de todo en todo, su perfección; y no echan de ver los desaguaderos por donde desaguan la fineza de otras mil virtudes que les faltan. ¿Qué se me da á mí que seáis casta con vos misma, puesto que se me da mucho, si os descuidáis de que lo sea vuestra criada, y si andáis siempre rostrituerta, enojada, celosa, pensativa, manirrota, dormilona, perezosa, pendenciera, gruñidora, con otras insolencias de este jaez, que bastan á consumir las vidas de doscientos maridos?"¹ He goes on to explain that none of these accusations apply to his own wife; but

¹ *Teatro completo de Cervantes*, vol. III, pp. 261-262. (Bibl. clásica.)

he has said enough. Did Scarron read this, and pass the thought along to Molière? The fundamental idea involved seems an uncommon one, and hence the less likely to have arisen in three minds spontaneously.

7. BENAVENTE.

Luis Quiñones de Benavente was the most famous writer of *entremeses* in the *siglo de oro*. His work is quite extensive, and of wonderful variety.¹ Play of fancy, intrigue, pictures of popular manners, moral instruction, satire, broad burlesque, all may be found in the pages of the Licenciado Benavente, who poured out his versatile talent in this secondary genre. In such a wealth of invention it is not surprising that one finds frequently touches which in aim and execution remind one of Molière. Yet despite many vague resemblances I have not observed a single instance in which it seems at all probable that Molière actually imitated the Spaniard. So I merely jot down a few of the most interesting examples.

There is for instance the churl Pablo, of *el Amor al uso* (Rosell, II, 112), a kind of burlesque George Dandin, who marries a rich wife and stands helpless, cursing himself, while her lovers depart with her. But that is a long way from Molière's far-reaching lesson to the *bourgeois*.

There is *las Burlas de Isabel* (II, 76), which contains perhaps the first stage version of the syringe forcibly applied to one who has no need of it. Young Isabel gets rid of an importunate old lover by putting on his trail a hospital

¹ The collection of *entremeses*, *loas*, and *jácaras* published by Rosell, 2 vols., Madrid, 1872 and 1874, is the only one accessible, and contains some two thirds of Benavente's published work. Almost all of his *entremeses* were printed by 1645, and some were written as early as 1610.

attendant armed with the "apothecary's weapon." Later Chevalier's *Désolation des filoux* (1661) presents a like ruse; this time used by sharpers to attract the attention of the simple Guillot while his pockets are picked. It seems likely that Molière made use of this farce by Chevalier in that burlesque scene of *M. de Pourceaugnac* (I, 15 and 16), where the unhappy Limousin lawyer is pursued by tormentors shouting "Piglialo sù."¹ But the writers of anecdotes had known and recounted such stories before; in particular may be mentioned d'Ouville, Boisrobert's brother, whose Conte, *D'un à qui l'on fit donner un lavement par force*, was published not later than 1644.²

El Talego-niño (I, 69) is a picaresque farce with elements of the ending of *le Bourgeois gentilhomme*. One Garrote is entrusted with some money for an errand, and is beset by two adventuresses who have scented gold. To obtain it they tell Garrote that with the aid of a little money they can transport him to India, where life is one continuous banquet. He furnishes the necessary travelling funds, and in a flash finds himself conveyed (by the imagination) to that promised land. The queen, strangely dressed, comes forth to meet him, and talks to him a strange jargon, to which he replies through an interpreter. He is decked out in Indian fashion, while Indians sing and dance about. Naturally, before the promised viands are brought on, queen, interpreter, Indians, and money disappear and leave Garrote to face his angry master. All this is, how-

¹ Cf. Despois-Mesnard ed., VII, 221. The *Désolation des filoux* is printed by Fournel, *Contemporains de Molière*, III, pp. 177-188.

² The date of the fourth and last part of d'Ouville's *Contes*. The one referred to may be found on page 51 of *l'Élite des Contes*, ed. Ristelhuber, Paris, 1876. D'Ouville tells it as something which took place in the days of Concini, and the minuteness of detail gives it a strong appearance of reality. For other earlier versions of the story, see the same volume, p. 65, n. 1.

ever, rather suggested than worked out, and there is no sufficient reason to suppose that Molière ever read *el Talego-niño*.

Lastly, I cannot refrain from calling the attention of students of Beaumarchais to *el Borracho* (I, 307). This brilliant *entremés* seems like the third act of *le Barbier de Séville* turned inside out. There is a barber, but he is the Bartholo, a suspicious old man with a pretty daughter. Figaro, fertile in plots, is a soldier, who gets shaved while his friend the gallant entertains the lady. While waiting for the shaving implements to be brought, the soldier, quite like Rosine, sings verses alluding to the events actually taking place. The song absorbs the old man's attention, but he arouses himself in time to see the lover take his daughter's hand. It is explained to the father that the girl is merely having her fortune told. The shaving process gives the young people more opportunity, and finally the soldier feigns to become drunk and falls on the floor. While the barber seeks some one to carry the fellow out, the gallant escapes with the lady, and the soldier with the money-sack. Crude as this is compared with such a refined product as *le Barbier de Séville*, in reading it for the first time one is startled into believing one has seen it all before; yet upon opening one's Beaumarchais one finds there not a phrase, hardly a word, which might indicate a possible connection.

There is one suggestion to be made in this place: The general spirit of Spanish romantic comedy was quite incompatible with Molière's genius. Sometimes he borrowed from it a plot, in whole or part; but Molière's plots do not make his strength. In that for which he is prized, — in grasp of character, delineation of foibles, exposure of vices, — he would have been encouraged much more by

the *novelas* and *entremeses*, the best of which excelled in those respects. We know what valuable matter came to him from the former, how much of *l'École des Femmes* from María de Zayas' *Prevenido engañado*, and how much of Tartuffe from the *Ingeniosa Elena* of Salas Barbadillo; perhaps wider reading among the *entremeses* would bring to light additional debts. As far as Molière's achievement is concerned, no one's opinion will be changed; we merely say, with Émile Roy, we do not know which to admire more, the memory which brought together such scattered elements, or the art which fused them.

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